



Center for Advanced Energy Studies Director Harold Blackman (right) addresses the Northwest Energy Innovation Summit in Boise as AAAS's Kei Koizumi (left) listens.

## Energy Innovation Summit explores opportunities in the Northwest

by [Marilyn Whitney](#), INL Communications & Public Affairs

The increasing urgency to reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil, address climate change and create new "green" jobs brought scientists, economic development officials, venture capitalists and entrepreneurs to Boise last week for the inaugural Northwest Energy Innovation Summit.

Idaho National Laboratory and the Center for Advanced Energy Studies (CAES) joined co-sponsors Stoel Rives LLP, Booz Allen Hamilton, Boise State University, Boise City, KPMG, the Watercooler and the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region in presenting this two-day conference exploring energy issues and opportunities in the region.

Among the headliners at the event were noted energy experts from GE Power and Water, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Microsoft, the National Science Foundation and General Atomics. Panel sessions included discussion of emerging energy trends, opportunities for technology transfer and commercialization and potential financing options for innovative energy systems and technologies.

Woodrow Clark II, author and co-editor on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, opened the conference by challenging the group to look at innovative ways to move beyond our dependence on carbon-emitting fossil fuels and develop alternative energy solutions for our homes, vehicles, businesses and communities. He pointed out the wide array of economic development opportunities as the nation and world search for energy alternatives.

The U.S. dependence on foreign oil and the need to address climate change were common themes among speakers and panelists. Keynote speaker and former CIA Director James Woolsey, who also currently serves as chairman of the Advisory Boards of the Clean Fuels Foundation and on the National Commission on Energy Policy, noted the need to "destroy oil as a strategic monopoly." He proposed that increased use of clean, affordable and secure electricity and biofuels — preferably made from cellulosic ethanol — offers the best alternatives to oil.

Woolsey emphasized the need for fundamental change to the world's largest industries — oil, electricity and transportation — which, he suggested, operate on outdated business plans. He predicted great change in the years to come and stressed that all options should be developed to provide energy solutions.

INL Deputy Lab Director David Hill emphasized the need to develop technologies that use all our energy resources in cleaner and more efficient ways. Research, development and demonstration of new technologies at INL allow Idaho to play a critical role in the region and will help make it possible to capitalize on the valuable energy resources in the Western Energy Corridor.

CAES Director Harold Blackman and Michael Hagood, with INL's Energy Systems and Technologies Division, also discussed energy resources and opportunities in the Northwest. Hagood provided details about regional energy resources, from the coal reserves in Wyoming and Montana to the oil shale and tar sands in neighboring Canadian provinces. He outlined INL's work on the Next Generation Nuclear Plant and other hybrid energy systems that will increase the efficiency of energy sources.

Blackman focused on the critical link between energy and water, particularly in the Northwest, and the need for a balanced energy portfolio. Richard Hess, INL's Biomass Program Technology director, highlighted INL's work in the development of cellulosic ethanol.

At the Summit's conclusion, conference chair Mark Rivers outlined a 12-month action plan to continue the momentum of the event with six next steps:

- Unite the industry into advocacy and action,
- Fight for higher education and research,
- Develop alternative energy incubators/accelerators,
- Lay the groundwork for a world-class science and technology park,



**INL's Michael Hagood highlights regional collaboration in the Western Inland Energy Corridor.**

- Initiate an Idaho Innovation Fund,
- Advance broader, better regional relationships.

The intent is to continue the dialogue and organize complementary events, including an entrepreneurs' showcase and a second summit next year.

Visit the [Northwest Energy Innovation Summit Web site](#).

View the presentations given by:

David Hill [Energy Now, Energy 2015](#)

Harold Blackman [Energy and Water—Globally and Locally](#)

Michael Hagood [Bi-National Regional Energy Resources](#)

Read coverage of the event from the [Idaho Statesman](#).

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